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DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Report of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations on its tenth session

Chairperson/Rapporteur: Mrs. Erica-Irene A. Daes

Addendum

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Opening statement by Mr. Antoine Blanca, Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

Your Excellencies, members of the Working Group, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you to the Palais des Nations and to open the tenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. I do so with particular pleasure since, for several reasons, this session is an especially significant one. First, we are gathered here for an anniversary session after a decade of progressive and constructive commitment by the United Nations on behalf of indigenous peoples since the first meeting in 1982. Then, the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. Finally, as it is the first opportunity I have had of meeting you since recently taking over the post of Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and that of Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, I should like to assure you of my great interest in your work and of my full support.

May I therefore welcome the representatives of Governments, indigenous peoples, specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations who will focus on the discussion of fundamental issues in the course of the next two weeks.

Your Working Group was set up, 10 years ago, to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous populations. It has also given special attention to the evolution and elaboration of standards concerning the rights of indigenous peoples.

Dispersed over several continents and living in States with a variety of economic and social situations, indigenous peoples are today confronted with similar problems, which have given rise to lengthy discussion within your Group and in other forums, in the course of the past decade.

The gradual disappearance of languages and of traditional arts and crafts constitutes a constant threat to unique cultures. With the loss of traditional land and territory for hunting and fishing, other essential activities are gradually dying out. A decline in life expectancy combined with an increase in diseases may also be observed in several indigenous communities. As a general rule, indigenous peoples are very under-represented in the political institutions of their countries. They are therefore virtually without power and are able to exercise only limited control over measures and decisions that influence their life and future.

Moreover, development and uncontrolled industrial expansion lead to serious deterioration of the environment; this has a negative impact on the life of indigenous peoples who have no control over the enterprises that are responsible for such a situation.

It is therefore no surprise that the issues most frequently addressed in this forum relate to the right to self-determination, autonomy and self-government; the rights established by treaties; the restoration of rights over territories, land and resources; the problem of deforestation, of the depletion of natural resources and other environmental damage; population transfers, forcible displacement and unemployment; the disappearance of and inevitable changes in traditional lifestyles; the consequences of assimilation policies; the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures; the dearth of medical care and services; as well as other human rights, such as the extrajudicial executions and disappearances of members of indigenous communities.

A number of problems relating to environmental damage frequently raised by indigenous peoples in the past are now universally recognized as issues of major importance. It is also recognized that indigenous peoples have considerable knowledge of the environment, as a result of their close association with nature, particularly the earth. The indigenous peoples can share this knowledge with the world, particularly in respect of environmental protection and management. Thus, the conclusions of the United Nations Technical Conference on Practical Experience in the Realization of Sustainable and Environmentally Sound Self-Development of Indigenous Peoples, held in Santiago, Chile, from 18 to 22 May 1922, have extensive implications for both the indigenous peoples and the international community.

For eight years, Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes has presided over your work and discharged the functions of Rapporteur. In order to carry through this task to a successful conclusion, she has succeeded in combining commitment and sensitivity. Last year, under her guidance, you made considerable progress in drawing up the draft universal declaration on indigenous peoples, a revised version of which is before you. I am confident that with perseverance and willpower, you will overcome any remaining difficulties. The draft declaration clearly demonstrates how far we have progressed in recognizing the 300 million indigenous persons in the world. The fact that the General Assembly, by resolution 46/128 of 17 December 1991, adopted a programme of activities for 1993, the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, selecting the theme "Indigenous people - a new partnership", also attests to the commitment of the United Nations to these people.

The main aims of the Year are as follows: to encourage international cooperation between States and intergovernmental institutions in order to resolve the problems affecting indigenous populations; to increase the participation of indigenous populations in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects and policies that concern them; and to promote public awareness of indigenous peoples.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has set up a special voluntary contributions fund for the International Year for the World's Indigenous People and has invited Governments and intergovernmental and

non-governmental organizations to contribute to it, the objective being to raise $500,000. The resources will be used to finance small-scale concrete projects intended to improve the living conditions of indigenous peoples and to promote an awareness among the public at large of this issue.

The first Technical Meeting on the International Year for the World's Indigenous People was convened from 9 to 11 March 1992. It was decided to elaborate programmes and undertake activities under six major areas: human rights, development and environment, education and culture, health, self-management and self-government, public events and information. I have pleasure in informing you that the next Technical Meeting will be convened in Geneva for three days, immediately after the completion of your work on indigenous populations. I hope that it will provide an opportunity to consider specific programmes which will be of direct benefit to indigenous peoples.

Since the meeting in March, I have had a number of encouraging communications from United Nations specialized agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations, expressing the genuine support of these various partners in the International Year. In my capacity as the Coordinator of the Year, I am endeavouring to encourage participation by United Nations bodies in this event and to ensure that their programmes enhance the activities that are selected, so as to produce a real impact on the populations concerned. I also sought the assistance of Governments in order to set up a small group of indigenous professionals to assist me in coordinating the activities of the International Year. Three Governments have replied favourably to this proposal: as from the end of the month, three representatives of indigenous populations will be working at the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, and I am confident that they will contribute their experience and special sensitivity to the projects that are envisaged.

I wish you every success in your work, and hope that, as a result of dialogue and mutual understanding, this session will be extremely fruitful and productive.

Opening statement by Mrs. Erica-Irene A. Daes, Chairperson/Rapporteur

Mr. Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights;

Distinguished fellow members of the Working Group;

Distinguished representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, indigenous peoples and non-governmental organizations;

Ladies and gentlemen,

First allow me to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Antoine Blanca, for his introductory comments and the kind words he addressed to me. It is an honour that he is with us today and we greatly appreciate his presence and his sincere concern for more effective protection of the indigenous peoples of the world community.

Let me also express my warmest thanks to my fellow members of the Working Group for electing me as Chairperson/Rapporteur. I am grateful to my distinguished colleagues, Mr. Alfonso Martinez and Mr. Hateno for their kind words. It is now the ninth session on which I am entrusted with this responsibility and I wish to assure you that I will endeavour to preside with fairness and objectivity and make our meetings once again fruitful and successful.

As this is the tenth session of the Working Group, I want to take a few moments to evaluate our work and above all set out some of the tasks that lay before us. Ten years may seem like a long time and sometimes, I know, some of you may feel that little has been achieved; but the process of peaceful and constructive change is a slow one.

Indigenous peoples in many countries of the world have faced decades and sometimes centuries of neglect, exploitation, prejudice, racism, poverty and misery. We cannot in a few years bring about sudden improvements in situations which have endured for so many generations. But what I believe is that we have begun a process in the United Nations to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples which cannot and will not be stopped.

The establishment of the Working Group in 1982 was a first step in an expanding involvement of the United Nations in the question of human rights of indigenous peoples. At our first meetings we had far fewer participants from far fewer countries; we had no Voluntary Fund to assist with the travel of indigenous peoples who had difficulties in raising money to cover their travel and living costs. Our agenda has grown considerably: we continue to focus on the two central themes of the Working Group - the review of developments and the elaboration of human rights standards - but many also vitally important issues are being addressed. We have started an extremely complex study on treaties and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous

peoples under the management and responsibility of Mr. Alfonso Martinez. The Economic and Social Council has approved further support for the study of cultural property, an issue of great sensitivity for Governments and indigenous peoples; I have been entrusted for the elaboration of this study.

There has also been a series of critical expert seminars: the first in 1989 at the United Nations Office at Geneva on the Consequences of Discrimination on Economic and Social Relations between States and Indigenous Peoples; it was significant that the Rapporteur of the Seminar was a personality from the Indigenous Peoples, Mr. Ted Moses; the report of the Seminar is now available as a United Nations publication. The second seminar, held in September 1991, was hosted by the Home Rule Government of Greenland and dealt with self-government, the third, held in May this year, was hosted by the Government of Chile and dealt with indigenous peoples and the environment. These important meetings have brought together indigenous peoples and governments on an equal basis in a friendly working environment to discuss difficult multiform and controversial subjects. Their suggestions and recommendations have been and will continue to be vital for the members of the Working Group, the indigenous peoples, the Governments and, of course, for the international community as a whole.

You may ask what all this talking and systematic work has achieved. I believe three things: in the first place, the United Nations, by creating this important forum and organizing meetings and approving studies, is contributing to a greater understanding of the rich cultures and ways of life of indigenous peoples. Without understanding there can be no respect between different peoples and cultures; without understanding there can be no tolerance and accommodation for diverse views and values; the absence of true understanding of the cultures of others is a root cause of much of the conflict that our world suffers today.

The second contribution made by our Working Group and the related activities is the elaboration of the draft declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples. Much of what has been discussed and suggested has found its way into our deliberations and is reflected in the draft. It is our hope that the declaration will be a major document which will significantly improve the situation of indigenous peoples everywhere in the world; it will be a standard which all Governments and indigenous peoples can aspire. But if this is to be so, we need to ensure that it contains the full range of ideas and concerns of indigenous peoples; we also need to reflect the views, suggestions and recommendations of Governments for it is they which will finally adopt the declaration at the General Assembly. Our discussions have therefore served an important purpose in giving indigenous peoples and Governments an opportunity to have a constructive dialogue. I would not say that we have reached a consensus on all matters but there is agreement, I believe, on some important aspects and even on some of the contentious issues there is less divergence than in the past.

There is a third reason for welcoming these regular meetings. The Working Group has become a focal point for 300 million indigenous people; I know from my travels and contacts with indigenous peoples that the interest in our work goes way beyond the gathering of people which are represented in this room. The Working Group has attained a symbolic importance for many indigenous people and is seen as a place where they can come, share their concerns and discuss their future. They know it is a free and democratic listening post of the United Nations - a place where their voice can be heard by the community of nations and peoples. For these reasons I want to implore all of you, especially indigenous peoples, to continue to support the work of the Working Group, help it to grow and learn, and take advantage of this unique forum where your views can be heard, discussed and taken into consideration.

This year, the tenth session of the Working Group, is a special moment in the process of change for indigenous peoples. At the international level, I believe that this year and the next year represent a watershed for indigenous peoples. I know, of course, of the significance of the year 1992 for the indigenous peoples of the Americas. This is a year to reflect upon the iniquities of colonialism and the terrible history of occupation and exploitation for the indigenous peoples of the continent. I respect the indigenous peoples of the Americas and appreciate that they consider this year of special importance, but I also believe it is important to look forward rather than backwards and build for the future. In the United Nations we must also consider that we are a community of peoples from all over the world. We must consider the human rights of the more than 30 million indigenous people living in the Americas, but we must also listen to the concerns of the 250 million indigenous peoples of Asia, the Pacific, Europe, and Africa. Our concern must be for indigenous people everywhere and we must use the time allocated by the competent bodies of the United Nations to consider problems and review developments concerning all the indigenous peoples of the globe within the framework of the mandate of the Working Group.

As you all know, the year 1993 has been proclaimed by the General Assembly as the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples. The Coordinator for the International Year is the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Antoine Blanca, and the Centre for Human Rights is responsible for the overall coordination of the activities and events. Immediately following the Working Group, from 3 to 5 August, there will be a technical meeting to discuss projects and activities related in particular to the International Year; I hope very much that as many indigenous people as possible will stay on for this important meeting. The success of the International Year depends to a large extent upon you; we need your ideas and suggestions; we need your cooperation and the involvement of all your nations and communities. It is my hope that we use the International Year to raise worldwide awareness of the situation of indigenous peoples and that we begin concrete projects which can assist indigenous peoples and become a basis for long-term improvements. We must see this year and next year as a starting-point for pioneering ideas, new initiatives and practical change in

the lives of indigenous people. Furthermore, in June 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights will take place in Vienna and this should also be seen as an occasion to make known the concerns of indigenous peoples.

Now a few words on how I propose that we organize our next two weeks. This week I propose that we continue the first reading of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. We began this work at our ninth session and I wish to continue to make substantial progress. We will first consider the paragraphs not yet considered by the members of the Working Group in first reading as they appear in Part B of document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/28. As we did last year, we will consider the text as revised by the Chairperson/Rapporteur on the suggestions which have been received. You will note that I have drafted three additional paragraphs for consideration for inclusion without prejudice for their placement. When we have finished the first reading of the draft declaration, it is my hope that there will be time to begin a second reading of the preambular and operative paragraphs as submitted by the members of the Working Group at first reading and revised by the Chairperson/Rapporteur. These paragraphs are contained in Part A of the document. I appeal to all of you not to make speeches and general comments but to propose specific suggestions, amendments and revisions.

I propose that our discussion of the second week begins with item 5: review of developments. This is an important part of the mandate of the Working Group as it was elaborated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1982/34. The members of the Working Group require regular and concise information about the current situation of indigenous peoples in the world and we look forward to receiving such information from Governments and indigenous peoples themselves. This is also extremely useful for our standard-setting activities because it indicates areas of concern which may require appropriate protection. However, as I do every year, I remind you that this Working Group is not a chamber of complaints and we have no authority to act upon information or communications concerning violations of human rights received; there are procedures and other forums for such interventions and I urge you to use the procedures available in the United Nations for human rights concerns.

We might also have an opportunity to consider the preliminary report of the Special Rapporteur on treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements, Mr. Alfonso Martinez, which will soon be circulated to you. There is in the agenda an item for discussion of the International Year, but as I said, there will be an opportunity for a full and practical discussion on the Year immediately following the Working Group; you may, therefore, wish to confine your comments to some practical preparatory aspects. As already mentioned, two important meetings have taken place since we last met: the expert meeting on indigenous peoples and self-government, held in Nuuk, Greenland, in September 1991; and the technical conference on indigenous peoples and the environment held in Santiago, Chile, in May 1992; the reports

of both these meetings are available in documents E/CN.4/1992/42 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/31 respectively. You will also be pleased to know that, thanks to a contribution from the Government of Denmark, a manual on practical experiences of indigenous peoples in internal self-government is being prepared by the Centre for publication in 1993. The Centre also plans to hold a regional training course on human rights in the Latin American region during 1993. It may be that further meetings could be held in the context of the International Year.

The Chairperson/Rapporteur has been asked to prepare a study on the cultural property of indigenous peoples for the Sub-Commission's 1993 session. I will therefore only make a brief oral statement at a later stage and request that those of you who wish to make suggestions do so under this agenda item. The Secretariat has prepared a brief note on intellectual property of indigenous peoples, a complex issue which overlaps to a certain extent on the question of cultural property. As is the usual practice, I will ask the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, Mr. Augusto Willemsen-Diaz, to present his report of the fifth session of the Fund. This year the Fund has assisted with the travel and daily expenses of 41 indigenous people representing 40 organizations and coming from 19 countries. I wish to thank the Governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Grenada, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Tunisia for their generous contribution; I also want to thank the World Council of Churches and the Shimin Gaikou Centre in Japan for their support for the Fund.

This concludes the proposals which I want to make concerning our agenda and the practical arrangements for the Working Group; as you see we have a very full agenda and our time is precious. I urge everybody to speak to the point and remember that we have many hundreds of speakers who wish to take the floor. Please be considerate to other speakers, respect the right to speak of everyone and try to make your points concisely.

I would like now to be allowed to pay special tribute to the Participating States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, for the concern they have expressed in connection with the protection of human rights of the world's indigenous peoples during their last meeting in Helsinki. The relevant paragraph 29 of the CSCE Helsinki document entitled "1992 - The Challenges of Change" reads as follows:

> "(29) Noting that persons belonging to indigenous populations may have special problems in exercising their rights, agree that their CSCE commitments regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms apply fully and without discrimination to such persons."

Now, as it is the established practice, I have undertaken in my capacity as Chairperson/Rapporteur an important visit to New Zealand at the kind invitation of the Government. The purpose of the visit was to gain first-hand information, to meet Government officials, indigenous peoples representatives

and other interested individuals, as well as to provide clarifications concerning the draft declaration and information about the Working Group and other activities of the United Nations for the protection of human rights of indigenous peoples. I express my deep gratitude to the Government of New Zealand for its invitation, the very interesting programme of activities and in particular for giving me the opportunity to meet with a great number of Maori representatives, including the respected Maori Queen, the Chief Judge and members of the Waitangi Tribunal and representatives of the Maori Congress.

Also, I have accepted the invitation addressed to me by the First World Indigenous Youth Conference, which was held in Quebec City in Canada from 13 to 17 July 1992. The principal theme of the Conference was "The Beginning of a New Era Towards Peace, Harmony and Understanding". The Conference was of historic importance. Hundreds of young people of every part of the world community, discussed freely a number of complex issues, the outcome of which is very useful not only for the indigenous people but for Governments and for the international community in general. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Federal Government of Canada, the Government of Quebec, all other Governments and youth organizations, who supported this Conference and in particular to the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec and to congratulate once again the organizers. In this respect, I would like to state that I was very much impressed by the young participants to the Conference. Once again, they reminded us that the indigenous youth is an essential human resource: dynamic, creative and innovative, anxious to participate enthusiastically and fully in the life of the society and to contribute effectively to its development at national, regional and international levels.

In concluding my opening statement, I would like respectfully to express grateful thanks to the drafters and supporters of General Assembly resolution 46/128 on the "International Year for the World's Indigenous People" and to recall the main theme of the Year which is "Indigenous People - a New Partnership".

Closing statement by Mrs. Erica-Irene A. Daes, Chairperson/Rapporteur

Distinguished representatives of observer Governments;

Distinguished representatives of indigenous peoples and nations;

Distinguished representatives of specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We have now completed the work of the tenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. We have had a very busy and productive 10 days. At this session 126 indigenous peoples, nations and organizations have been represented and some 250 indigenous individuals have participated. We have also benefited from the participation of many representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as scholars and other individuals. Well over 516 people have attended our tenth session in addition to representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations.

This year, 1992, we have seen even more delegations of indigenous peoples coming to the Working Group and I believe this is a testimony of the growing need for this forum and for its vital importance to indigenous peoples from around the world. The Working Group is the main meeting place for the world's indigenous people in the United Nations system. Thousands of indigenous people travel many hundreds of kilometres, enduring hardships and difficulties in order to attend the Working Group and make their contribution. I know that for some the sacrifices needed to raise the funds to be able to travel to and live in Geneva, even for a short time, are great. I appreciate the efforts you are making to be part of this United Nations body and I and my fellow members of the Working Group will try as always to merit the trust you put in us.

By establishing the Working Group in 1982, the United Nations recognized the serious problems and discrimination faced by indigenous peoples. The Cobo study - as it is now called - the study of discrimination against indigenous peoples prepared by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities - drew attention to the deprivation of indigenous peoples in matters of health, housing, education, employment and welfare. Since 1982 the Working Group has had the opportunity, through direct testimonies, to hear about the discriminative treatment suffered by indigenous people throughout the world and many of the observations of that landmark study have been confirmed. The Working Group has also been a forum for the exchange of ideas concerning the standards necessary to protect and promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. Some basic principles were developed and this year we have completed our first reading of

the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Working Group has travelled a long way in its short 10 years of life and I believe indigenous peoples have now taken their rightful place in the discussions and on the agendas of the United Nations.

One of the most hopeful and welcome developments in these past 10 years has been the mobilization of indigenous youth, which was demonstrated so dramatically by the First World Indigenous Youth Conference in Quebec just a few weeks ago; I had the great honour and pleasure of addressing the young indigenous people of many nations that assembled there. All of our work here is for the youth and children who will carry on after us, and inherit the world that we have made. But it is also important that young people be given opportunities to make their own distinctive contributions to our work today, and help us build the world they will live in with their own children. I would like once again to express my warmest appreciation to the Cree youth for launching this important conference, and to the Aboriginal youth of Australia for agreeing to host the second conference in Darwin next year. I would also warmly welcome any commitments that might be made by United Nations agencies with the relevant competence, such as the ILO, UNESCO and UNICEF, to work directly with organizations of indigenous youth, on special projects for strengthening the participation of indigenous youth in world affairs.

Another hopeful development was the inclusion of a chapter on indigenous peoples in "Agenda 21", the plan of action adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro last June. This was a consensus text, adopted by heads of Governments, and while it is not as comprehensive as our draft declaration of indigenous rights, it reflects many of the same principles. In particular, it recognizes the important role which should be played by indigenous peoples as managers of their own territories and resources, and as partners in decisions which affect them, not only at the national level but at the international level as well. The Rio Summit specifically recommended that every United Nations agency, and every Government, devise mechanisms for indigenous participation in decision-making on matters of environment and development. I intend to follow with great interest the implementation of this crucial recommendation by the General Assembly this autumn and by States Members.

Allow me to make some evaluation of our work during this tenth session of the Working Group. Permit me also to share with you my expectations for the future. Once again, it is my opinion that we have made significant progress in our standard-setting. I am grateful to all indigenous people, the Governments, the inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the numerous scholars who have contributed so positively to our work. We cannot make progress without a spirit of goodwill and the real desire to reach understanding and find solutions.

We have now completed the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples at first reading; we considered a further 16 paragraphs. We have also enjoyed a stimulating and productive discussion of certain key concepts and notions, in particular the concept of "self-determination". We also have had the opportunity to consider operative paragraphs 1 to 14 (inclusive) in second reading. The members of the Working Group and I have listened attentively to all that has been said and the secretariat has taken extensive notes and gathered together your suggestions, revisions and amendments; and the members of the Working Group are faced with a great many suggestions and ideas to consider and reflect upon. In view of the time constraints and, in particular, the very large number of speakers under item 5, I decided not to interrupt our work this week with private meetings of the Working Group. For this reason the Working Group members will meet during the next days to consider all the suggestions. Let me make some comments on how we will proceed: it is my intention and that of the Working Group to revise the operative paragraphs that were considered at first reading as soon as possible; the full draft declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples, as agreed upon by members of the Working Group at first reading, will be annexed to the report of the Working Group to the Sub-Commission. It is my wish to submit the report, together with the text of the draft declaration to Governments, specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations requesting their comments, amendments and suggestions. These comments, amendments and suggestions, at the request of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, will be reproduced by the secretariat in the documentation of the eleventh session of the Working Group.

As I stated in my introductory comments to document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/28 containing the revised draft declaration, I, as Chairperson/Rapporteur, will provide some preliminary comments on certain terms and concepts. I will also examine how the paragraphs of the declaration can be ordered more logically and consider the appropriate placement of the three new paragraphs of the revised declaration. Finally, it is my suggestion that the Chairperson/Rapporteur also revise operative paragraphs 1 to 14 in the light of the comments made by participants during the tenth session of the Working Group, the suggestions and recommendations of distinguished members of the Working Group, and other appropriate written submissions. It is my hope that the Working Group can finish the second reading of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples during its eleventh session; I believe that the Working Group has an obligation to prepare the draft declaration for 1993 - the International Year for the World's Indigenous People.

The most fitting contribution the five members of the Working Group can make to the celebration of the International Year is to complete their work on the text of the declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. As experts, it is our task to prepare a document that is technically sound, and fully reflects the needs, concerns, and rights of indigenous peoples, with due regard to their different conditions around the world; that task can and should be completed at our eleventh session, in 1993. Only when we have

completed our task as a Working Group can the work of gaining universal approval and adoption of the text really begin: that will not be an easy task and it will require great energy and wisdom on the part of indigenous leaders, and great foresight and understanding on the part of States. But I am heartened by the confidence-building that has already taken place at meetings of this Working Group, and by the positive tide of world public opinion, which should support the aspirations of indigenous peoples, particularly during the coming International Year.

I am proposing that the Working Group request the Sub-Commission once again to extend our eleventh session so that we have 10 working days. This will allow us to continue to make progress on the draft declaration and to provide sufficient time to discuss the other important items on our agenda. It is my sincere hope that by 1993 - this important year for indigenous peoples - the Working Group can have a balanced consensus text which could be ready for submission to the higher bodies of the United Nations. However, let me also say that I am fully aware of the anxieties of some indigenous peoples about the future of the declaration when it reaches the Commission on Human Rights. Furthermore, it is my conviction that it will be necessary to consider how indigenous peoples can continue to participate fully and without discrimination in any other forums which might be established to examine the draft declaration; it is also essential to find the means to support indigenous people financially so that they can continue to contribute to the process of standard-setting.

The next time we meet, it will be at the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. I have already expressed some personal views on priorities for the International Year, but would like to take this opportunity to launch an urgent appeal to Governments, non-governmental organizations and international, educational and business institutions, to contribute generously to the Fund established to support the programme of activities. As a result of the continuing financial difficulties faced by the United Nations, there will be no support for this International Year from the regular budget of the United Nations. I deeply regret this situation which must seem very unsatisfactory and discriminatory from the point of view of indigenous peoples. I would like to note, in particular, that the relevant General Assembly resolutions (45/164 and 46/128) reflect the view that this International Year be devoted to practical projects, aimed at the problems facing indigenous peoples in their communities.

I repeat, the aim of the Year is to support self-development at the grass-roots level. This requires a significant commitment of financial resources from outside the United Nations system. It also requires that indigenous organizations themselves take responsibility for designing appropriate projects that benefit their communities and can be achieved during the International Year with the resources available. This should be seen by every one of the world's indigenous peoples as an opportunity to take direct

responsibility for their most pressing concerns, with the support and recognition of the United Nations. I urge you all to take complete ownership of your International Year and make it a success that will always be remembered.

As you know, by now, the Coordinator for the International Year, Mr. Antoine Blanca, is now assisted by three indigenous people. I hope you have had an opportunity to meet these people and will share your ideas with them.

Another historic event - the World Conference on Human Rights - will take place in June 1993. It is unthinkable that the agenda of the Conference will not contain an item referring to the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and to issues related to them.

I would like to express my deep personal appreciation for the widespread interest of Governments and indigenous peoples in our work, for their continued efforts to work together with us in a spirit of sincere understanding, cooperation and openness, and for their positive and constructive approach. I know that indigenous organizations, in particular, must often make sacrifices to participate in these meetings - so far from their homes, from their families, and from the ancestral lands that they love and seek to defend. For this reason, I want to assure all of the indigenous peoples present in this room that I will continue to devote my very best efforts to our work, regardless of the personal cost to myself. I can do no less.

I would like to express my gratitude to my distinguished colleagues, members of the Working Group, Mr. Alfonso Martinez, Mr. Chernichenko and Mr. Hatano, Ms. Attah and Mrs. Mbonu. I also greatly appreciate the constructive participation of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs of Australia, Mr. Robert Tickner, and to the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of External Relations and Trade of New Zealand, Mr. Roger Farrell, as well as other distinguished representatives from Observer Governments. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the representatives of indigenous peoples and nations, to the International Labour Organisation and to other intergovernmental organizations.

I wish further to express my gratitude to members of the secretariat: Mr. Cisse, Mr. Burger, Miss Vincenti, Mrs. Stamatopoulou-Robbins and Ms. Mann. A very special word of thanks to the interns: Ms. Buff, Ms. Fiamma, Ms. Gerber, Ms. Johnson, Ms. Reipschlager, Ms. Roulet, Ms. Snowshoe, and Mr. Tadesse. It is also a pleasure to express my thanks for the assistance of Ms. Martineau and Ms. Savva of the NGO liaison service, and Ms. Diakosavva and Ms. von Funke who have been assisting the NGO Liaison Service. I want also to thank the three new indigenous staff members: Mr. Dahl, Mrs. McLaughlin and Ms. Teigmo who have been active in making contacts and exchanging ideas

throughout the 10 days of the Working Group. Further, I would like to reiterate my appreciation and congratulations to the International Service for Human Rights and DOCIP for the excellent volunteer work they have done in the Technical Secretariat.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to emphasize that the attainment and enjoyment by everyone - indigenous and non-indigenous person - and everywhere of universally recognized standards of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights present humankind with a challenge of daunting magnitude. Our reply and action to this tremendous challenge should be the opening of new avenues for the indigenous people which all of us should follow in order to establish an ever firmer foundation for a further recognition, protection and restoration of indigenous peoples' rights and the realization of the ideals of sustainable development, economic security, freedom and human dignity.

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